I WANT...

...TO KISS YOU.

Tune In to the Midnight Heart
Finding the girl behind the voice.

...ARISU.

I LOVE YOU LOTS...

GOOD CALL, KIRINO.

Hmm...

I SEE HOW IT IS.

...KISSING WOULD DEFINITELY MAKE IT MORE CONVINCING.

IF WE WERE A COUPLE...

WELL, I'M NOT REALLY SURE IF THIS WILL MAKE HER JEALOUS...

NOW, HIMEKAWA WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO STEP IN.

I ALWAYS ACTED AS THE PRINCE IN THOSE KINDERGARTEN PLAYS, AFTER ALL.

...BUT I'M PRETTY GOOD WITH FAKE KISSES.

IS THIS GIRL SERIOUSLY NOT GOING TO STOP UNTIL OUR LIPS ARE ABOUT TO TOUCH?!

SHE'S GETTING A BIT TOO CLOSE TO ME, THOUGH.

ISN'T SHE BEING A BIT TOO PASSIONATE ABOUT ACTING HERE?!

IS SHE ACTUALLY GOING TO KISS ME?

ARE YOU SERIOUSLY GOING TO—

HOLD IT, KIRINO!

ピク

STOP!!

TWITCH

THIS IS TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE, NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT!

HELL, YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE DOING THIS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL!

CALM DOWN, NENE-CHAN!

SCREECH

キィ

WH-WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS THINK-ING?!!

LET ME EXPLAIN...

SORRY, THEY WERE JUST *ACTING.*

WE'RE AT SCHOOL, YOU KNOW!

BLAH かくかく YADDA しかじか BLAH YADDA

POUT

I'M NOT MAD OR ANYTHING.

BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE LOOKED AS AUTHENTIC IF WE HADN'T DONE THAT.

LOOK, WE'RE SORRY FOR TRICKING YOU...

IT'LL BE FINE... I THINK.

SHE'S ACTUALLY MAD, ISN'T SHE?

HELL IF I KNOW!

SO, WAS THIS EXPERIENCE HELPFUL FOR YOUR ACTING?

ANYWAY, LET'S TRY AND HELP HIM CLEAR THINGS UP.

JUMP

I SERIOUSLY HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO DO.

YOU WERE A LIFESAVER, KIRINO.

This whole thing was Shinobu's idea!

Whoa, Rikka-chan?!

PLOMP

...

IT REALLY MADE US LOOK LIKE A COUPLE.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D PRETEND TO KISS ME.

IT ACTUALLY MADE ME SWEAT, IN FACT.

BEEP

FOR A SECOND, I THOUGHT YOU WERE REALLY GOING TO KISS ME.

I KNOW, RIGHT?

UM...

MY AD-LIBBING SKILL TOTALLY SAVED YOUR BACON BACK THERE.

COME ON NOW. OF COURSE I HAVEN'T.

HERE.

COFFEE BLACK

HAVE YOU EVER...

It's Cola.

IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU.

WHAT? YOU HAVEN'T KISSED HER?

...KISSED NENE BEFORE?

FWIP

THEN WHY'D YOU ASK ME SUCH A QUESTION ...?

NOT REALLY ...

DID SHE TELL YOU OTHERWISE?

Cola

SST
YES...
ALL RIGHT. IF YOU SAY SO...

HEY, CAN I HAVE YOUR DRINK INSTEAD?
I ALREADY TOOK A SIP FROM IT, THOUGH. ARE YOU SURE?

STARE

I'M JUST GONNA...

...MAKE DO WITH THIS FOR NOW.

OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DRINK COFFEE.

BFFFT

It's so bitterrr!!!

IF YOU'RE STILL IN LOVE WITH ME...!!

IF YOU... IF YOU'RE GOING TO FORGIVE ME...!

...THAT YOU LOVE ME ONCE MORE?!!

...WILL YOU TELL ME...

YEAH, ESPECIALLY AFTER GETTING ALL THAT FLAK. THAT TAKES GUTS.

I'M IMPRESSED HIMEKAWA-SAN ACTUALLY CAME BACK HERE.

ACTING INTENSIFIED!

OIZUMI-SAN'S PERFORMANCE IS SO INTENSE!

I LOVE YOU LOTS...

...ARISU.

...ARE A COUPLE, AFTER ALL.

THE TWO OF US...

...THAT YOU LOVE ME ONCE MORE?!

WILL YOU TELL ME...

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR STUPID MUG EVER AGAIN.

GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!

CLAP CLAP CLAP

YOUR EMOTION REALLY SHINED THROUGH!

SQUEEZE

IT TRULY FELT LIKE YOU GOT TWO-TIMED...

YOUR EXPRESSION AND THAT LINE WERE BOTH EXCELLENT!

DID YOU ACTUAL-LY...

...GET TWO-TIMED FOR REAL?

Heh.

UM... DO YOU WANT TO JOIN OUR CLUB OR SOME-THING?

WHOA, SERI-OUSLY ?!

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT, YEAH.

DO ELABORATE! I'D LOVE TO KNOW MORE!

Uh...

YEAH, I SAW THAT.

YOU WERE MAGNIFICENT.

BAM!

I MANAGED TO ACHIEVE MY PAYBACK.

NOW PRAISE ME!

YEAH. I'VE LEARNED TO BE MORE OPEN WITH MY EMOTIONS...

...AND SPEAK MY MIND WHENEVER I CAN.

IT SEEMS EVERYTHING'S BEEN GOING WELL WITH YOUR CLUB, TOO.

It's kind of em-barrass-ing when you're so direct about it.

SO, THANKS.

YOU MIGHT HAVE... PLAYED A PART IN THAT.

...

THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.

I KIND OF GET WHAT IT MEANS WHEN PEOPLE SAY EMOTION IS SPONTANEOUS NOW.

IT'S SOMETHING THAT JUST SLIPS OUT EVEN WHEN YOU TRY TO BOTTLE IT UP.

I'D LOVE TO BE ABLE TO ENHANCE MY ACTING WITH IT.

YOU'VE CERTAINLY SHOWN SOME GROWTH.

PUTTING ON AN ACT WITH IKO WAS WORTH IT, AFTER ALL.

Wa ha ha!

THAT WAS IKO'S AD-LIB.

I THOUGHT YOU'D BUTT IN EARLIER, YOU SEE.

UHUH.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO...

GO THAT FAR AND TRY TO KISS EACH OTHER, THOUGH.

HOLD ON A SECOND.

...WOULD YOU TWO HAVE ACTUALLY KISSED?

SO, IF I HADN'T INTERFERED...

SIGH

IT WAS ALL JUST AN ACT. THERE'S NO WAY WE'D DO THAT.

KIRINO AND ALL YOU TEENAGE GIRLS SURE LOVE TO TALK ABOUT THIS STUFF.

?

THUD

THUD

GLANCE

THAT SO?

IKO MIGHT HAVE SERIOUSLY DONE IT, YOU KNOW.

NOPE. NOT IN A MILLION YEARS.

IF IT WERE ME...

...I WOULD HAVE JUST KEPT GOING AND KISSED YOU.

GASP

WHAT?

DASH

I-IT'S NOTH-ING!!

I'M GOING HOME!!

WAIT!!

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!

I'M JUST SPOUTING WHATEVER NONSENSE THAT POPS INTO MY HEAD NOW BECAUSE OF YOU!

WHY ARE YOU BLAMING ME-

TUNK

I NEEDED TO GET SOME PAYBACK FOR THAT PRANK, YOU SEE.

Heh heh.

IT DID LOOK PRETTY SPONTANEOUS, DIDN'T IT?

THAT WAS ALL JUST AN ACT.

TMP

I GUESS I'VE REALLY...

...GOTTEN BETTER AT ACTING.

CHAPTER 22: PAYBACK ACHIEVED